

RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
DATED OCTOBER 20, 2005

Appln. No. 10/734,040

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November 9, 2005

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 1, with the following amended paragraph:

As shown in Figures 4 and 5, each ring 32 and 34 has an outwardly facing circumferential groove 44 that receives a sealing member, such as an O-ring 46. To effect a seal that is independent of the housing 12, a band 48 is positioned in spaced relation radially away from housing portions 14 and 16.

Band 48 surrounds the rings 32 and 34 and has an inwardly facing surface 50 that sealingly engages the O-rings 46 to effect a fluid tight seal around the ends of pipes 18 and 20.

The pad-to-pad engagement of lugs 26 and 27 ensures that a radial separation 52 is maintained between the band 48 and the housing portions 14 and 16. Radial separation 52 allows band 48 to float on the O-rings 46 and maintain concentricity with the pipes 18 and 20. By remaining substantially concentric, band 48 maintains substantially equal pressure circumferentially around the O-rings 46 and thus ensures a fluid tight seal at the joint formed by coupling 10 despite the permitted axial and angular displacement of pipes 18 and 20. Housing portions 14 and 16 have a second pair of shoulders 33 ~~positioned in longitudinally spaced relation.~~ Shoulders 33 are positioned adjacent to shoulders 30 ~~so as to engage on opposite sides of band 48 to engage the band edges~~ and help maintain its ~~eoneentricity~~ engagement with O-rings 46 to ensure the fluid tightness of the joint. The separation 29 between rims 28 and pipes 18 and 20 is controlled relative to the radial separation 52 between housing portions 14 and 16 and band 48 such that if contact occurs, it occurs first between the rims 28 and the pipes 18 and 20, thereby

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preventing further contact between the housing portions 14 and 16 and band 48.